

SOME RANGE EXTENSIONS AND OTHER NOTABLE RECORDS OF FOREST
BIRDS FROM EASTERN AND NORTHEASTERN TANZANIA

S.N. Stuart & D.A. Turner

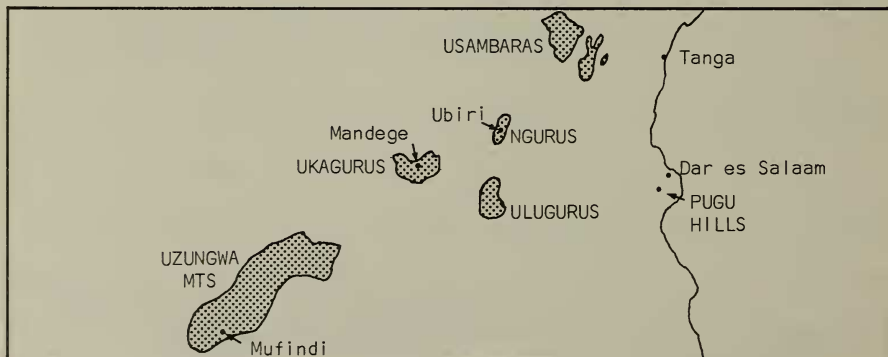
Since 1977 there has been increased interest in documenting the range and status of many forest birds in eastern and northeastern Tanzania, particularly the little known endemic and near endemic species (see Appendix 1).

Moreau (1966) referred to the richness of the montane forest areas of eastern and northeastern Tanzania in his discussion of the Tanganyika-Nyasaland montane block, though at this time referring to it as an area of great complexity. Dowsett (1971), however, preferred to regard the southern Malawi block as separate from the Nyika and southern Tanzania montane areas, while at the same time separating the Usambaras, which although rich in unique species, he felt were more closely related to the Kenya montane regions. Indeed, Dowsett was of the opinion that the Usambaras have no connexion with the Tanganyika-Nyasaland group, whose northern limit is best taken as the Ulugurus, and their impoverished neighbours the Ukagurus and Ngurus.

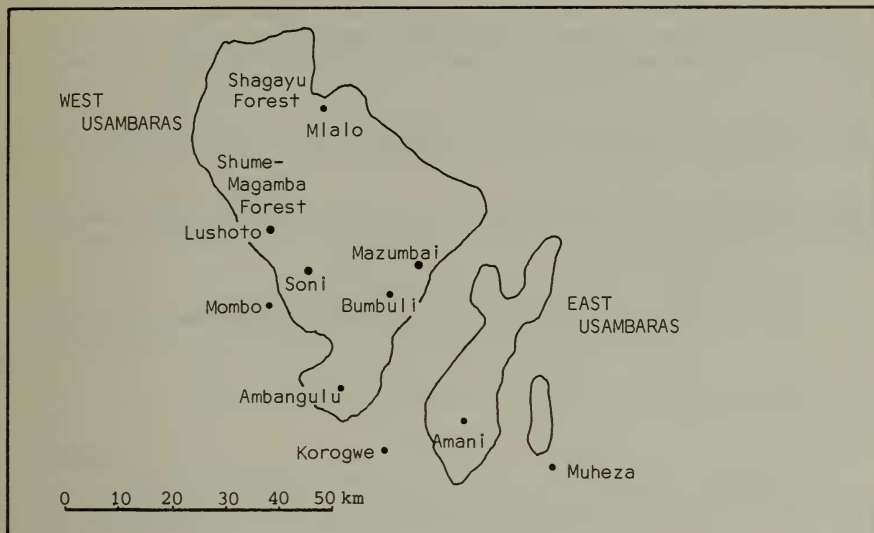
It is of interest to note that the forests of the two old mountain blocks, Usambara and Uluguru, contain an avifauna far richer in species and endemics than either their immediate neighbours (Uzungwa, Ukaguru, Nguru and Pare), or the forest on the volcanic mountains to the north (Meru, Kilimanjaro, Chyulus, Aberdares and Mt Kenya). The situation is paralleled in butterflies and orchids (Moreau 1966). Despite the objections raised by Dowsett, a large proportion of montane species range throughout Moreau's entire Tanganyika-Nyasaland group, from the Usambaras to southern Malawi, showing, we feel, at least some degree of similarity and association.

Certainly the Tanganyika-Nyasa montane group, as defined by Moreau, contains at least 20 endemic or near endemic species, which include some of Africa's rarest and least known birds. An unusually high proportion (40 per cent) of the endemics are forest floor/undergrowth thrushes. The Usambaras alone support no less than ten forest floor thrushes, a situation unparalleled elsewhere in Africa, with nine occurring together at Amani (900 m), seven at Mazumbai (1500 m) and five at Shume (2100 m) (see Appendix 2).

Map 1 shows the highland forest areas of eastern and northeastern Tanzania dealt with in this paper. Some of the more noteworthy species are treated below.



Map 1. Forest areas in eastern and northeastern Tanzania



Map 2. The Usambaras

Bostrychia olivacea Green Ibis

Up to five at one time recorded in the Amani Forest, East Usambaras on 27 and 28 July 1978. Another was seen at the same locality on 26 November 1979. These are the first records of this species from the Usambaras since 1932 (Sclater & Moreau 1933).

Circaetus fasciolatus Southern Banded Snake Eagle

One seen at Mazumbai on 2 June 1977. Not previously recorded from the West Usambaras. At 1450 m this is probably the upper altitudinal limit.

Buteo tachardus Mountain Buzzard

Single birds recorded from Mazumbai in June 1977 and March 1980, from the Ngurus and Ukagurus in August-September 1978, and from Mufindi in the Uzungwa Mts during November-December 1979 (S. Tyler, pers. comm.). It is believed that this species occurs in suitable habitat throughout Tanzania (Turner, in prep.).

Hieraaetus dubius Ayres' Hawk Eagle

At least two pairs at Mazumbai in June 1977, while an immature was seen there on 13 July 1979. First records from the West Usambaras.

Poicephalus robustus Brown-necked Parrot

Small flocks were seen flying over forest canopy at 925 m in the Ngurus in September 1978. Not previously recorded from these mountains, which probably represent the northernmost limit of the species.

Tauraco fischeri Fischer's Turaco

Recorded on occasion at Mazumbai since 5 June 1977 where, at 1500 m it is sympatric with *T. hartlaubi*. Nearby, at Ambangulu (1200 m) it is abundant. These are the first records from the West Usambaras since those from Bumbuli documented by Friedmann (1928).

Bubo poensis vosslerleri Nduk Eagle Owl

Previously only recorded from the East Usambaras, though White (1974) notes

its probable occurrence at Ambangulu. However, J. Tanner (pers. comm.) has recorded it on several occasions at Mazumbai, last on 14 March 1978. Subsequently one was netted at Ambangulu on 12 October 1979. The range of this species can now be extended to the eastern side of the West Usambaras.

Schoutedenapus myoptilus Scarce Swift

Small flocks were observed at dusk at Mazumbai during March 1980. These are the first Usambara records.

Neafrapus boehmi Böhm's Spinetail

Recorded twice during early September 1977 at Amani, and at Mazumbai on 10 August 1978, subsequently on a number of occasions there. These are the first records from the Usambaras.

Telacanthura ussheri Mottle-throated Spinetail

Although fairly common and frequently seen at both Mazumbai and Ambangulu, this species had not, in fact, been recorded previously from the West Usambaras.

Ispidina picta Pygmy Kingfisher

One at Amani on 30 July 1977 is the sole Usambara record.

Campethera abingoni Golden-tailed Woodpecker

Singles at Mazumbai on 31 May, 1 June 1977 and 13 July 1979, and at Ambangulu on 15 August 1979, extending its range to the West Usambaras.

Campethera cailliautii Little Spotted Woodpecker

One at Amani in September 1977 is the sole record from the Usambaras.

Smithornis capensis African Broadbill

Recorded at Mazumbai on 5 June 1977 and December 1979, and in the Shume - Magamba Forest on 23 July 1979. First records from the West Usambaras.

Pitta angolensis African Pitta

One attracted to lights at Bumbuli Hospital in May 1979 (M. & S. Thompson, pers. comm.). This record accords well with the May records from Amani (Sclater & Moreau 1933) and is the first record from the West Usambaras.

Oriolus chlorocephalus Green-headed Oriole

It to be fairly common at Ambangulu in August 1979, this representing the first record from the West Usambaras. Also common at 1200 m in the Ngurus in September 1978 and at 1000 m in the Ulugurus in January 1980.

Oriolus larvatus Black-headed Oriole

A pair seen frequently at Amani during August and September 1977 was the first record from the East Usambaras.

Dryocichloides anomalus Olive-flanked Ground Robin

One at Mandege, Ukagurus, on 28 August 1978 was the first record for the area.

Dryocichloides lowei Iringa Ground Robin

Fairly common at Mufindi, Uzungwa Mts, during August and September 1979.

Dryocichloides montanus Usambara Ground Robin

Common in the Shume-Magamba Forest, West Usambaras; also recorded three times at Mazumbai since 27 May 1977, down to 1600 m. This represents an eastward extension of range, as Hall & Moreau (1962) describe it as restricted to the western edge of the West Usambaras.

Modulatrix orostruthus Dappled Mountain Robin

A total of seven have now been netted at Amani, East Usambaras, since July 1977, and despite extensive coverage of the Usambaras it has not been recorded elsewhere. With a total of 18 records, half of which are of collected specimens, this must surely be one of Africa's rarest birds.

Modulatrix stictigula Spot-throat

In the Usambaras this species occurs from 900 to 2300 m, being common at Mazumbai but much less so in all other localities. It occurs alongside *M. orostruthus* at Amani (900-1200 m).

Sheppardia gunningi East Coast Akalat

Fairly common in the Pugu Hills Forest near Dar es Salaam in September 1978; this is probably an important locality for the species.

Sheppardia sharpei Sharpe's Akalat

Although not previously recorded from the West Usambaras, this species is, in fact, common throughout both East and West Usambaras, from 900-1600 m.

Turdus gurneyi Ornage Ground Thrush

Occurs in small numbers throughout the Usambaras from 900-1800 m, being recorded from the Shume-Magamba, Mazumbai, Ambangulu and Amani forests.

Apalis moreaui Long-billed Apalis

This very rare species has been recorded on very few occasions at Amani since June 1977 and, despite extensive coverage throughout the Usambaras, has not been found elsewhere.

Bathmocercus winifredae Mrs Moreau's Warbler

Common in the forest at Mandege (Ukagurus) in August 1978. Previously known only from the nearby Uluguru where, due to serious habitat destruction, the population may now be considerably reduced.

Macrosphenus kretschmeri Kretschmer's Longbill

Resident in small numbers at Mazumbai, West Usambaras, where it has always been found in company with *Phyllastrephus* greenbuls.

Bias musicus Black and White Flycatcher

The only records from the West Usambaras were those from Mazumbai during May and June 1977 and March 1980.

Cinnyricinclus sharpii Sharpe's Starling

Two birds at Mazumbai on 25 March 1979 constitute the only Usambara record since 1931 (Sclater & Moreau 1931).

Anthreptes neglectus Uluguru Violet-backed Sunbird

Common at Amani during July and August 1977 and in the Pugu Hills Forest near Dar es Salaam in September 1978. Although previously unknown from the West Usambaras, it was fairly common at Ambangulu at 1200 m in August 1979.

Anthreptes pallidigaster Amani Sunbird

Appears to occur only intermittently at Amani, where it is attracted by flowering trees.

Anthreptes rubritorques Banded Green Sunbird

In the Usambaras this species is common at Amani at 900 m, and at Ambangulu at 1200 m, but it is much less common at Mazumbai (1500 m).

Nectarinia moreaui Moreau's Sunbird

Abundant at Mandege, Ukagurus, in August 1978 and recorded once from Ubiri at 1200 m in the Ngurus on 5 September 1978.

Ploceus olivaceiceps nicolli Usambara Weaver

Possibly a maximum of only ten pairs at Mazumbai (1500 m). All searches for the species at Shume-Magamba and at Amani have failed, suggesting, perhaps, a decline in the Usambaras.

Mandingoa nitidula Green-backed Twinspot

A pair seen on 11 and 13 March 1978 at Mazumbai (1500 m) by L. Tanner (pers. comm.) is the first record from the West Usambaras.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank C.W. Benson for details of southern Malawi forest birds, and Tessa van der Willigen, H.R.C. Holland, Janet Simkin, Mr & Mrs J. Tanner and Drs M. & S. Thompson for other additional records. We also thank Mr & Mrs Tanner for their very generous hospitality at Mazumbai.

REFERENCES

- DOWSETT, R.J. 1971. The avifauna of the Makutu Plateau, Zambia. *Revue Zoologique et Botanique Africaine*. 84: 312-333.
- FRIEDMANN, H. 1928. A collection of birds from the Uluguru and Usambara Mountains, Tanganyika Territory. *Ibis* 12th series 4: 74-99.
- HALL, B.P. & MOREAU, R.E. 1962. A study of the rare birds of Africa. *Bulletin of the British Museum (Natural History) Zoology* 8: 313-378.
- SCLATER, W.L. & MOREAU, R.E. 1932-23. Taxonomic and field notes on some birds of north-eastern Tanganyika Territory. *Ibis* 13th series 2: 487-522, 656-683; 3: 1-33, 187-219, 399-440.
- TURNER, D.A. in prep. The Mountain Buzzard *Buteo tachardus* in Tanzania.
- WHITE, G.B. 1974. Rarest Eagle Owl in trouble. *Oryx* 12: 484-486.

APPENDIX 1

*Endemic and near-endemic birds of the Tanganyika-Nyasaland montane forests
[as defined by Moreau 1966]*

Species	Taita Hills	Usambara	Nguru Ukag	Ulugu	Uzungu	S.Tanz h'lds	Nyika	S.Malawi forests
<i>Bubo poensis vosseleri</i>		x						
<i>Orilolus chlorocephalus</i>		x	x	x				x
<i>Andropadus milanjensis</i>	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Alethe choloensis</i>								x
<i>Alethe fuelleborni</i>		x	x	x	x	x	x	
<i>Dryocichloides anomalus</i>			x	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Dryocichloides lowei</i>					x	x		
<i>Dryocichloides montanus</i>		x						
<i>Modulatrix orostruthus</i>		x						
<i>Modulatrix stictigula</i>		x	x	x	x	x		
<i>Sheppardia sharpei</i>		x	x	x	x	x	x	
<i>Apalis moreaui</i>		x						
<i>Bathmocercus winifredae</i>			x	x				
<i>Orthotomus metopias</i>		x	x	x	x	x		
<i>Laniarius fuelleborni</i>		x	x	x	x	x	x	
<i>Malaconotus alius*</i>				x				
<i>Anthreptes rubritorques</i>		x	x	x				
<i>Nectarinia loveridgei</i>				x				
<i>Nectarinia moreaui</i>			x					
<i>Ploceus olivaceiceps nicolli</i>		x		x				
Total number of species	1/20	13/20	11/20	13/20	8/20	8/20	5/20	4/20

*No records since 1962

Headings: Taita Hills, SE Kenya/Usambaras/Ngurus and Ukagurus/Ulugurus/
Uzungwe Mts/S Tanzanian Highlands/Nyika Plateau, Zambia-Malawi/

APPENDIX 2

Forest floor/undergrowth thrushes occurring in
the Usambara Mts, northeastern Tanzania

Species	Altitude range (m)	West Usambaras		East Usambaras
		Shume 2100m	Mazumbai 1500 m	Amani 900 m
<i>Cossypha natalensis</i>	200-900			x
<i>Neocossyphus rufus</i>	200-900			x
<i>Alethe fuelleborni</i>	600-2300	x	x	x
<i>Modulatrix orostruthus</i>	900-1200			x
<i>Sheppardia sharpei</i>	900-1600		x	x
<i>Turdus gurneyi</i>	900-1800		x	x
<i>Modulatrix stictigula</i>	900-2300	x	x	x
<i>Pogonocichla stellata</i>	900-2300	x	x	x
<i>Turdus abyssinicus</i>	900-2300	x	x	x
<i>Dryocichloides montanus</i>	1600-2300	x	x	
Total number of species		5/10	7/10	9/10

S.N. Stuart, c/o Box 44, Soni, Tanzania and D.A. Turner, Box 48019, Nairobi

(Received 1 May 1980)